Little Tommy Tin.

Who pulled her out?

Little Tommy Trout.

He implies that this book was deliberately "Burked" at the time the Commissioners "Burked" Dr. Telfer and, like the mythical cat, retrieved only when it suited them. "Burking" would, incidentally, have been an especially apt word for any sort of shady Asylum business, since the original William Burke smothered ("hushed up") his victims in order to sell their bodies for dissection (according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary).

The apocryphal "similar book," which never existed in Park's time and which was probably suppressed by the Commissioners themselves, becomes another local scandal like "the humours of the red-gown, and the horrors of the tin box" (standing for the mayor's office and some fiscal matters). The affair at the Asylum becomes a farce, a "comedy," but one that has only just begun to effect a rough sort of poetic justice. The "Burkers" appear to be in "agonies," suffering the slow suffocating death that Burke inflicted on his original victims, falling into the pit "they digged with their own hands." Rev. Roaf himself will have a hard time obtaining "his clearance certificate from the mad house."

In the issue of March 31, 1847, it is reported that a City Alderman named Beard addressed Workman as `worthy Doctor', and that Workman angrily rebuked him that he is the alderman representing the Ward of Saint David. Beard then accused him of `taking notes, and writing articles for this journal'. Risking exposure, the Editor mocks the Alderman for having so `shrewdly suspected a Doctor's Lance had been employed on the occasion'. Modern readers of Workman's annual reports ought to suspect him of employing the journalist's pen at least as effectively.

Workman himself describes his method of using the reports as `important channels' in `a system of general courteous exchange' with `the whole body' of asylum superintendents in Europe and America (report for 1859, 39).[xi] Such statements amount to a warning to his government, that his criticisms will be